

P.O Life

Life in the Pyrénées Orientales



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from the Palais des Congrès

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n°22

2019
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Contactez nous ...

Kate : kate@anglophone-direct.com
 Jane : jane.mann@wanadoo.fr
www.anglophone-direct.com



SPLAT! Somebody's been playing paintball! They've peppered the countryside with splodges of emerald green, and shots of poppy red and iris yellow. The PO is shaking off its winter colours with a vigorous shrug of its vine-covered paysage and beckoning us into the game.

And despite all the doom and gloom as the pound continues to misbehave against the euro, there is so much you can do here in the Pyrénées-Orientales without spending a centime. Wander around the sweet smelling peach and cherry orchards, explore the vineyards, walk, swim and picnic along the coast, clamber around the mountains and waterfalls, follow our 'Out for the Day' for some great adventures as we take you across the border, or just sit in the sunshine and watch the world go by... The possibilities are endless and will not cost you 'la peau du cul' (great French expression, just a little vulgar, referring to the skin off your bottom)!!

Wherever you are, whatever you choose to do, we wish you sunshine and a springtime of laughter and relaxation in this beautiful region.

Kate & Jane



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Welcome to the Pyrénées-Orientales!
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WALK CASSAGNES TO BELESTA CIRCULAR

A lovely walk, about 3 1/2 hours including lunch break (take a picnic) and an occasional pipi break! (pause pipi sauvage)

Access : Drive to Cassagnes and park by the cemetery.

Walk :

- ✓ Cross the road, turn right and follow yellow sign 'Balcon du Pic Aubeill'. The gravelled track goes uphill fairly steeply.
- ✓ At a notice saying Piste F134 keep right, continue uphill, and take left turn, snaking uphill to a T-Junction of tracks. Turn right at signpost and arrive at second signpost. Take a left towards the summit of Pic Aubeill, down a narrow fairly steep path. (1hr).
- ✓ As the path flattens and becomes wider, pass the ruins of St Bartholomew's Chapel on your left, with lovely views down towards the Barrage sur L'Agly.
- ✓ Turn left by a sign saying 'À Travers Les Âges', 'Boucle du Pic Aubeill' and pass round a superbly preserved Dolmen, a hippie encampment (although we have never seen anybody

there) then steeply downhill on a rocky path. At the bottom turn left, following 'Belesta 350m' 'Boucle du Pic Aubeill'.

✓ Enter the village of Belesta following the yellow paint markers, past the now derelict Cave Co-op, and turn right along the D21 Chemin De Pic Aubeill,



Bank holidays

As you can imagine, the many bank holidays in April and May are a joy to schoolchildren! Often extended into a long weekend if the holiday falls on a Tuesday or a Thursday, many businesses will 'faire le pont' and take the Monday or the Friday off as well. (Major chains unlikely to do this)

- ✓ Monday April 13th : Easter Monday (Lundi de Pâques).
- ✓ Friday 1st May : May Day (La Fête du Travail)
- ✓ Friday 8th May: La Fête de la Victoire 1945 (WW2 Victory Day)
- ✓ Thursday 21st May : Ascension - the fortieth day of Easter (Le Jour de l'Ascension)
- ✓ Sunday 31st May : Whit Sunday (Pentecôte)
- ✓ Monday 1st June : Whit Monday (Lundi de Pentecôte)

School holidays for our region (Zone A)

Half term : 4th - 19th April

t h e n

left down a steep hill past the post office, to a children's play area and picnic tables, a good spot to have your picnic (2hrs).

- ✓ Continue down hill, take sharp right at the bottom, up a track leading away from the

village.

Ignoring all lefts and rights continue to a T junction of tracks, turn left and wind along to a road. Cross and turn left, then right uphill to sign 'À Travers Les Âges' 'Boucle du Pic Aubeill'.

- ✓ Continue uphill with Belesta to your left. As the village disappears you will see St Bartholomew's Chapel below.. Eventually the track meets the signpost to Pic Aubeill again where you can turn uphill to climb the Pic Aubeill or continue along the track ahead until you return to the first signpost you met.

Here you can either turn right and go down the way you originally came up, about an hour back to your car, or turn left where it says Cassagnes 1.7 kilometres, a bit steeper but only 25 minutes.

We wimped out and took the quick way back. A lovely walk, well worth doing.

Do you know of a great walk in the region? Why not share it with us?

Don't forget....

Mother's Day (la Fête des Mères)

Sunday May 31st

Did you know?



LA FÊTE DU TRAVAIL AND LA FÊTE DU MUQUET

The first day of May in France is *La Fête du Travail* and therefore a bank holiday. Watch out! **Everything will be closed!** It is also *La Fête du Muguet*, and the tradition is to **give those you love a little bouquet of lily of the valley**, to wish them happiness and good luck in celebration of the arrival of spring.

There will be no problem finding a bouquet of Lily of the Valley as this is the only day in France when you can legally sell something without a license to sell. The only requirement is that you must sell your flowers at least 100 meters away from a flower shop.



SAY AHHHHH

But don't swallow! Yes, it's THAT time of the year! **Swallows** throughout the P-O are **searching for their dream nest-from-nest** in the sun for the birth of their Easter egg babies. Very cute, and particularly appealing to animal-loving Anglo Saxons, make sure you're a happy host and willing to wade through bird poo, dried mud and bits of stick if they've chosen your porch for their holiday home!

The nest is built primarily by the female, although the male does a bit of this and that when it suits. Now what other species springs immediately to mind??

Hmmmm. I can't imagine!

Songs of joy

Listen out for the *goigs dels ous* (or *joie des oeufs* in French), **ancient traditional Easter songs**, from the Middle Ages, sung by choirs in traditional Catalan costume.



LEST WE FORGET ...

The Pat O'Leary line

The Pat O'Leary line was one of the very first escape routes set up to smuggle those fleeing the Nazi regime across the Pyrénées mountain range and on to the relative safety of Spain. Several secret escape routes were carefully organised during the war (the Comete Line, the Pat O'Leary Line, the Marie Claire Line...) thanks to a network of local helpers, usually at great personal risk, many of whom were arrested, deported or shot. The tracks chosen were through the high mountains, freezing cold, rough, strenuous, the trek usually carried out at night in order to avoid official checkpoints and German patrols. According to official statistics, there were more than 32,000 successful escapes along the Pyrenean chain. Next time you're skiing or walking in the mountains, gaze over towards Spain... and remember.

Dali OVERLOAD?

As **Al Pacino** continues filming in Catalonia for the 2009 "**Dali & I: The Surreal Story**," **Antonio BANDERAS** has signed up to play the legendary artist in yet another biopic about the Spaniard's life entitled "**Dali**", also to be filmed in north Catalonia. But that's not all! The release is soon expected of "**Little Ashes**," in which the young Dali is portrayed by **Robert Pattinson**, London-born actor best known as Cedric Diggory in the Harry Potter films. **Little Ashes** follows the intense friendship of three revolutionary young artists: Dali, Lorca and the Surrealist film maker Luis Bunuel, their feelings, their sexuality. . .

AND WHILST WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF Dali...

... did you know that he produced a short 17 minute film in 1929 called "**Un Chien Andalou**", in collaboration with Luis Buñuel and designed specifically to shock? It did! A woman's eyeball is slashed open, ants crawl out of a man's hand, priests, (one of whom is Dali) are attached to grand pianos, each with a bloody dead donkey inside. Controversial then ...and not my "*tasse de thé*" today either! An absolute gift for budding psychoanalysts!



MONEY MATTERS

Income tax

A very general look at your income tax obligations in France.

The French tax year **extends from 1st January to 31st December**. It is up to you to complete your own tax return (*la déclaration des impôts*) and hand it in for the **deadline**, usually on or around 31st May. Failure to meet the deadline could mean a **fine of up to 10%** of your unpaid tax bill, and the French tax officials are not known for their charitable acts! To ensure it is received, hand it in yourself at your tax office or send by recorded delivery.

You may opt to pay in **three equal instalments** (*tiers provisionnel*) or **10 monthly instalments** (*mensualisation*) by direct debit.

Tax residents should simply visit their local tax office (*Hôtel des Impôts*) to arrange this, whereas non-residents with tax obligations in France should contact the:

Centre des Impôts des Non-résidents,
TSA 10010 - 10 rue du Centre - 93465 Noisy le Grand Cedex.
Telephone: 0033 (0)1 57 33 83 00
E-mail: nonresidents@dgi.finances.gouv.fr

Once you have made your first submission by collecting and returning your tax form to your local tax office, you will be "in the system", and **pre-completed forms** (*déclarations préremplies*) should be sent to your home automatically, with the previous year's details already filled in. It is worth taking advice from a tax professional, particularly if you have "world wide wealth" to be sure of **taking full advantage of the Income Tax Treaty** (agreement between countries regarding taxation) where applicable, and that you are not missing out on any tax concessions (relating to childcare, school-age children, purchase of a 'green' car, mortgage interest on a principal residence...).

★ Did you know that you can **open a sterling bank account** in any CIC bank (as well as several others) by depositing a sterling cheque or cash? This means that you can change money into euros at a moment's notice when the rate is favourable.

ASPA

UK pensioners in France may now qualify for French state benefits of up to 467 euros per month due to the poor exchange rate pushing some expat pensioners below the poverty line. They may also be exempt from income tax, *taxe d'habitation* and TV licence (*audio-visuelle*). The ASPA (*allocation de solidarité aux personnes âgées*) is similar to the UK's pension credit scheme. If your income is no more than €648 a month for a single person or €1,136 a month for a couple you may well be entitled to be topped up monthly to these amounts. You should apply for this allowance via your local *mairie*. They may know nothing about it, so ask them to find out for you by contacting SASPA www.saspa.fr – this is their responsibility!

pension allowance

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PROCESSION DE LA SANCH

Friday 10th April 2009: 15h - 18h
Good Friday

Impressive, atmospheric, just a little frightening, the long black and red hooded and robed figures of the Procession de la Sanch march slowly through the streets of Perpignan to the solemn beat of black veiled tambourines.

The Procession de la Sanch, which takes place every *Vendredi Saint*, (Good Friday), opens the celebration of the Easter Holy week.

The procession as a whole commemorates the Passion and the Agony of Christ. At the head of the parade walks a red robed figure, *le regidor*, warning the crowds of the procession's approach by intermittently ringing an iron bell as he leads the penitents to the gallows. They carry *misteris* (full-size representations of the different scenes of the Passion)



through the streets of Perpignan. Of course, over the years the Sanch has become a great crowd puller and a fabulous photo opportunity but for the *pénitents* carrying crosses, crucifixes and religious statues weighing thirty to fifty kilos, this re-enactment of Christ's Passion is real enough. The pro-

*“some walk bare-foot, others
are on their knees”*

cession takes place in silence – some walk bare-foot, others are on their knees. . . only the **sound of the tambourine**, and the occasional peal of the bell breaks the eerie atmosphere, along with the *Goigs*, traditional Easter songs which accompany the march.

Over the centuries the Sanch has been forbidden several times. It has always survived.

Night processions also take place in the evening at Collioure and Arles-sur-Tech.



The history

The brotherhood of “La Sanch” (the blood, pronounced sank) was founded in 1416 by Vincent Ferrier at the church of St Jacques in Perpignan, its origin to assist and accompany the condemned to their execution. A preacher, Ferrier is said to have undergone a life changing experience in 1398 when he nearly died of the fever, but was miraculously cured after Christ appeared to him in an apparition. He attracted followers, penitents from all

SANT JORDI AND

FÊTE DU LIVRE ET DE LA ROSE

(the rose as a symbol of love and the book as a symbol of culture)

Celebrated on or around 23rd April, a date linked to literature and popular traditions, Sant Jordi is the Patron saint of Catalonia and the French equivalent of St George.

St George was a **Christian Roman soldier**, who was martyred around 303AD for refusing to renounce Christianity. According to legend, he **rescued the princess from the mean old dragon**, the king and the whole population converted to Christianity in gratitude and **roses grew from the ground** where the dragon's blood had been shed.

At the end of the 19th century, Sant Jordi became a Catalan symbol as it was felt that his struggle against the dragon was similar to the **Catalan struggle for freedom**. It became traditional to give a rose and a book to a loved one and

walks of life, who he led around Europe, preaching penance and helping sinners to prepare for judgment and punishment.

The wearing of the black and red hooded robes (orcaparutxe) was to prevent criminals being recognized and 'lynched' in the streets as pay back for crimes committed, and prisoners, penitents, (there to give solace to the person about to die), and executioner were hooded for maximum confusion.

Catalan proverb

Si plou per Sant Jordi les cireres en orris !
If it rains on St. George's day,
there will be no cherries!

annual literary competitions were held to stimulate young people to cultivate Catalan literature and language, a tradition which inspired UNESCO to declare this date the **International Day of the Book**.

Offer your lady a rose, buy your partner a book in the streets of Perpignan which turn into a hive of culture and literature, as bookstalls set up on the *quai Vauban*, *place Gambetta*, and *place Arago*, and towns and villages throughout the region .

(April 23rd is not only famous because of the legend of St. George, but also because it is the anniversary of the death of great Spanish poet CERVANTES and the believed date of birth of our very own SHAKESPEARE)

PILGRIMAGE NOTRE DAME DU CORAL

On *Lundi de Pentecôte*, or Whit Monday, the traditional pilgrimage to the Ermitage Notre Dame du Coral, in the commune of Prats-de-Mollo, takes place. Remote and isolated, pilgrimages to Notre Dame du Coral have been taking place since the 15th century.

In 1428, the hamlet of «Miralles» was destroyed by an earthquake but its chapel was miraculously saved! According to legend, a wooden statue representing the Virgin and previously from the original tiny chapel built on the site, was found in a tree trunk, sparking off pilgrim fever and leading to the building of the present church and hermitage.

From 1730 to 1911 the chapel was occupied by a wandering hermit (*un ermite forain*) who travelled from door to door with his *Capelleta*, a sort of portable trunk containing religious objects, to obtain funds to maintain the buildings.

Over the years, the chapel has sheltered pilgrims, soldiers, hermits, and religious cults.



What's on?

Our pick of events around the region. For a more detailed events calendar, visit us on www.anglophone-direct.com

11th - 19th April

Leucate

THE 2009 MONDIAL du VENT

Wind sport festival - La Franqui beach
Leucate opens its doors once again to lovers of the sea, the waves and the wind. **Extreme sports** meet up for BMX, skating, sand yachting, windsurfing, kite surfing, kite buggy, fun board, demos and participation in roller skating, kite flying... and many related forms of entertainment throughout the week... with a bit of help from the Tramontane of course.

Villefranche de Conflent

12th April

FÊTE DES GÉANTS

Don't miss the **procession of the giants** through the streets of Villefranche, enormous painted papier-maché figures, sometimes 14 or 15 ft tall, with traditional clothing and a person inside. Most towns have their own giants, often representing some important person in the history of the town. They usually appear in couples, often as king and queen, or some other important person and go out during the patron saint holiday of the town (Festa Major) or on special days, and dance in the streets with little "big-heads" or "cap-grossos".

© <http://geants-villefranchedeconflent.chez-alice.fr>

Rugby
LEAGUE
with THE
CATALAN
DRAGONS

13th April

18th April

26th April

3rd May

16th May

23rd May

H

H

A

Edinburgh

H

A

Wigan

Salford

Hull KR

Leeds

St Helens

Celtic

Vide-greniers (car boot sales)

Taking place mainly on Sundays, the vide-grenier, the nearest equivalent to the car boot sale, is a chance to get rid of those unwanted bits and pieces. Get there early if you want to get the bargains and avoid the rush! NB If you wish to display/sell at a vide-grenier, you will normally need to register in advance to book your 'emplacement' and show some proof of identity when registering. More information on how to do this from your local town hall.

APRIL

Saturday 4th

Collioure

Sunday 5th

Sorède

Latour Bas Elne

Perpignan

Sunday 12th

Saint-Laurent-de-la-

Salanque

Monday 13th

Toulouges

Sunday 19th

Bouleternère

Rivesaltes

Sunday 26th

Céret

Saint-Génis-des-

Fontaines

MAY

Friday 1st

Canet

Argelès-sur-Mer

Canet-Plage

Corneilla-la-Rivière

Ille-sur-Têt

Sunday 3rd

Port Vendres

Saturday 10th

Enveitg

Théza

Sunday 17th

Bolquère

Saint-Michel-de-Llotes

Sunday 21th

Sorède

Vernet-les-Bains

Sunday 24st

Opoul-Perillos

Villelongue de la

Salanque

Sunday 31st

La Cabanasse

Saint Feliu d'Amont

25th April-30th May

Les Aspres

ASPRES MUSIC FESTIVAL

The sixth Festival of Music, Art and Wine celebrating Spring in the Aspres opens on Saturday 25th April in Trouillas village - **Painting exhibitions, music, buffet ...**and continues every weekend with barber shop, tangos, Spanish, Catalan, traditional French music, Paris of the the 40s and 50s, street music, jazz, pop rock, Latin American...

Infos: ASDAMA, 4 rue des Acacias, 66300 Trouillas or ring 0468 531000

EASTER EGG TRAIN for children

Rivesaltes

12th April

Take a train ride with the Train du Pays Cathare et du Fenouillèdes between Rivesaltes and Axat and search for Easter eggs in the forest before picnicking around a giant omelette. Infos: www.tpcf.fr/

Visit our site and register
for our free **weekly newsletter** !

16th May **Regional**

LA NUIT DES MUSÉES

Free evening at Regional museums - A national and international initiative allowing **free entry to many of the museums** of the region and throughout France. The museums invite the public to (re)discover the culture and colour of the museum, more particularly from a nighttime point of view, so atmospheric music and light play a starring role in many of the shows and exhibitions, with special events, conferences etc... Not all museums will participate so it is worth checking in advance.

For more details, visit www.nuitdesmusees.culture.fr

31st May

Céret

PERPIGNAN MARATHON AND 10KM RACE

Every year, around 800 participants take part in "courir pour la vue, courir pour la vie" All profit from these two separate races, a marathon and a 10km race, goes towards the **purchase of special equipment for the visually and hearing impaired**. This year, proceeds will also go to Alzheimer's victims.

More info: email: patricia-vedrenne@wanadoo.fr
or visit www.marathonperpignan.com

23rd- 24th May

FÊTE DE LA CERISE

Céret



The annual cherry festival in Céret is a colourful weekend of **stone spitting, music, dancing and entertainment in the streets**, not to mention the inventive recipes involving cherries served up in the local restaurants.... or why not try a glass of cherry beer, cherry wine, cherry pie, cherry pasty, cherry burger, cherries on toast, cherries with spam...?

Cherry market both days (Saturday from 15h, Sunday from 10h)

A selection of Easter events...

Goigs dels Ous (traditional Easter songs) in villages around the département

- 9th April** *Night time procession of the penitents in Bouleternère*
- 10th April** *Afternoon procession of the Sanch in Perpignan*
Night time procession of the penitents in Colloure, Ossèja, Arles sur Tech.
- 12th April** *Procession of the Resurrection in Céret, Les Angles, Ille-sur-Têt (with traditional songs of the « Régina » 140 chorists and 40 musicians).*



Selection of events from the **Palais des Congrès, Perpignan**

For the full programme of events visit www.congresperpignan.com

PALAIS des CONGRÈS

Les Rendez-vous du Caveau de la Huchette. *This regular jazz 'club' brings together talented jazz musicians.*

7 th April - Patrick Saussois - Alma Sinti Quartet

5th May - Just Friends & Philou Nagau & Lionel Deuquet et Lena

Festival Confrontation-

2nd - 8th April - Institut Jean Vigo
Theme : MADE IN USA / Mythes et rêves américains (in English)

Ford, Huston, Wilder.... a celebration of the greats of the American film industry

For a full programme of films, visit <http://www.inst-jeanvigo.eu/>

ÉGLISE des DOMINICAINS

Sacred Music Festival -
3rd - 11th April

Based around encounter and discovery... and in particular Italy and its music



WINE ON A BUDGET

with John Fairclough

With the huge variety of wine available in Roussillon, its easy to overlook or even forget the plethora of interesting and competitively priced wines produced in Languedoc. Here are a couple of the offerings, one red, the other white, from "just up the road".

CHATEAU St LAURENT de L'ORT

Faugères 2007

Faugères is a Languedoc-Roussillon Appellation I've not come across much. . However, since 1982, in a dry schiste plain, next door to St Chinian near Beziers, it's had its own appellation. This rich red wine is bottled in Chateau from an equal mixture of Syrah and Grenache. Dark purple in colour in the glass it promises the fruity, spicy notes that this mix of varieties offers, and certainly does not fail to deliver. As so often with this type of wine however, it pays to uncork it 4 hours before drinking. A robust wine of 13% ABV, it is best enjoyed with red meats (we had ours with a superb faux filet), and strong cheeses, Chateau St Laurent can be found at Leader Price for the bargain sum of 3€00.

L'ESTABEL CLAIRETTE DU LANGUEDOC

Cabrières 2007

Close to Pezanas is the village of Cabrieres. In 1948 this was one of the first areas to gain an Appellation in Languedoc Roussillon. It produces a distinctive white winer that reflects the limestone schiste soil of the region. As with the Faugères, it's not a wine that I've sampled much. Apparently there is something of a mini-revival of the type going on, and it's being now sold outside the immediate area, which is why I found L'Estabel in my local Intermarché for a very reasonable 2€70. Dry, yet full bodied (12.5% ABV) for a local white, there is plenty of wood, but with lemony overtones, and this would be an ideal wine for light summer meals, or plates of seafood/shellfish.

"The last time that I trusted a dame was in Paris in 1940. She went out to get a bottle of wine. Two hours later, the Germans marched into France."

Sam Diamond

in *Murder by Death* (1976)



Catalan cuisine

In an old convent in Ille sur Têt there is a most unusual bakery. Henri Poch, baker extraordinaire, perpetuates the skill and knowledge of his father and grandfather in producing the most scrumptious breads and pastisseries imaginable. The bakery is open from Friday to Monday, coffee and snacks are served in the garden and, this summer, light lunches will be available too. Le Couvent is not only a bakery but also a B&B and a school

In 1805, the French Empire, under Napoleon, was the dominant military land power in Europe, but it was the British Royal Navy who controlled the seas and actually gave the French navy its present motto, to be found on all official naval paraphernalia. It originates from the Battle of Trafalgar when, on April 1st. Admiral Lord Nelson engaged Napoleon in battle off the South Western coast of Spain, south of Cadiz. "To the water, it is time" he cried, and the British Navy leapt into their ships and defeated the French. This rousing call-to-arms was so successful that it was translated and adopted by the French Navy whose troops call to each other "A l'eau, c'est l'heure" whenever they meet.

Restaurant reviews

by Ellen Hall

Totsompops Colera, Spain

Catalan home cooking

✓ The best thing about Colera used to be the road out. No longer! The family-run restaurant **Totsompops** (opened July 2008) has changed all that. If you are looking for fresh local ingredients prepared with love (and plenty of olive oil), this is the place!

✓ A practitioner of the **Slow Food philosophy**, chef Joan's interest in cooking dates from summers in his grandparents' garden and kitchen. "This is my dream," the thrill of this new venture animating his youthful face.

✓ The weekday **lunch menu is 12.50 euros** for four courses, including bread, wine, water and coffee. Joan's wife Carme offers help with the Catalan menu. Wines are local - we drank a red from Vilajuiga just the other side of the hills. Many of the choices are vegetarian-friendly.

We started with an entree of grilled artichokes, after which I had escalivada (aubergine, onion, pepper, and potato) and David chose chard with bacon. For the main course he ate a rice dish known as "arroz" which can contain whatever is available - here rabbit, spare ribs and octopus - and I had

monk fish grilled to perfection. For dessert we chose Mel i mato (absolutely yummy honey from Colera with fresh ricotta) and baked apple with raisins, cinnamon and pine nuts. We finished the meal with an excellent cup of coffee. Generous portions, friendly service, nice place.

✓ The dining room with **welcoming fireplace** is decorated in warm reds and cool greys... and an **octopus motif**. ("Totsompops" translates roughly as "We are all octopus".) In addition there are four bedrooms each furnished in the best tradition of contemporary Spanish design. See their web site: www.totsompops.com

✓ Go there! How? Follow the coast road south across the border to Port Bou (where you can stop to admire Dani Karavan's stunning raw steel memorial to Walter Benjamin). Continue a few snaky kilometres to Colera. Totsompops is the first thing you see: a bright red building on the left.

Check out **hundreds of reader's restaurant reviews** on our forum at www.anglphone-direct.com



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Château de Valmy

Château de Valmy, a Disney-esque fairytale castle rising out of beautifully tended vineyards beside the expressway between Argelès and Collioure, owes its existence to small pieces of paper specially designed to go up in smoke.

In 1839, Joseph Bardou, with his father Jean, founded the **JOB cigarette paper** factory. When they patented their trade name, between the initials J and B they placed a **lozenge shaped oval** signifying the city of Perpignan. Known ever after as **JOB**, their business flourished. So swift was the rise of the family's industrial empire that,

"The wines of Valmy graced the tables of both the King of England and the Tsar of Russia"

in 1888 Joseph's son Pierre commissioned the **Danish Architect Viggo Dorph-Petersen** to build three châteaux.

Petersen was well known in the Pyrénées Orientales for his extravagant Belle Epoque style, his work



was much sought after by all the Catalan Bourgeoisie. Each of Pierre's children was to receive a Petersen château. For Jeanne, just married to Jules Pams, Château de Valmy was to be built.

For twenty years, as **Jules Pams's** political career went from strength to strength, the fairy tale couple welcomed famous visitors to their fairytale estate. He became **Agriculture Minister** and his wife Jeanne became the queen of the emerging myth of Valmy. Her portrait hangs today in the salon on the first floor. The wines of Valmy graced the tables of both the **King of England and the Tsar of Russia**. Jules and Jeanne Pams died leaving no heirs.

The allure of their estate attracted many but no one had the wealth to maintain the property until, one day, in 1930, **Victor Piex**, a wealthy distiller, visited the château and, within an hour, met his lawyer, signed the papers and Valmy had a new owner. The domaine prospered. He built **the caves** over which his flag of Valmya flies to this day. After his death in 1952 his widow took over the reins but at her death in the early 80s, the estate all but died with her. Old fashioned, deserted by children and grandchildren the property risked **falling into ruin**. The beautiful roof began leaking, the rooms were empty.

It wasn't till 1997 that **Bernard Carbonell**, grandson of Victor Peix, with his wife and



two daughters, took on the challenge of **saving the property** in which he had been born. First the vineyards, then in 2001 the château. The **task was immense**, but the result is more than successful. Three years of work turned Château de Valmy into a Chambres d'Hôtes second to none, the vineyards are thriving, the wine of top quality.

Everything at Valmy is **first class** and five luxurious letting rooms enable guests to enjoy all the dream castle of Viggo Dorph-Petersen in a **comfort un-imagined a century ago**. 0468812570 www.chateau-valmy.com

Six hectares of land within Château de Valmy's grounds, is owned by the Commune of Argelès and is open for the public to stroll through and enjoy. There is a picnic area, games for children and, from Spring onwards, all manner of festivals and festivities take place there. A Flower Festival in April, Flamenco and Art, Pop Music, Sardane Aplecs, all happen at Park Valmy. 0468814725



VALMY WINES

The tasting rooms of Château de Valmy have views over the perfectly manicured vineyards to the sea and through great glass doors to the air conditioned fermentation cellar with all the latest gleaming stainless steel equipment.

No lovers of quality wine should fail to visit them. The range of Valmy wines runs from a delicate white vinified in oak barrels, through rosé, a range of reds to l'Or de Valmy, a beautifully balanced naturally sweet wine.

The time for Rose has come round again! And P-O Life has chosen the **Château de Valmy Rose**, its pink hue both bright and deep, its fruity aromas dominating its refreshing flavour.

Served well chilled it can compliment dishes of Collioure anchovies, fish main courses or even spicy dishes and makes a perfect apero. 7.80 euros a bottle.

The prize winning **Château de Valmy Rouge**, at 9.80 a bottle, is a well rounded wine made from a preponderance of Syrah accompanied by Grenache Noir and Mourverde. Low yields from the pebbly terraces, careful hand picking and constantly controlled vinifying ensure a deeply purple, well structured wine with supple balance and rich fruity character. Ideal with red meats and, if chilled, with white meat and fish.

Opening hours of the Cellar:

In season (15 April – 15 October): 9h30 – 12h30 and 14h30 – 19h00 from Monday to Saturday. Closed on Sunday

Out of season (15 October – 15 April): 9h30 – 12h30 and 14h30 – 18h00 from Monday to Friday. Closed on weekends

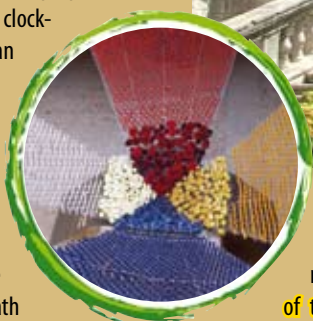
Girona, as well as being an exciting city to visit, is the local hub of Ryanair so it seemed a good idea to have a few suggestions of how to fill in a few hours or a day there.

The city centre is a **great mix of historically interesting old and vibrant lively new**, all within easy walking distance. The **Rambla de la Llibertat**, a busy market in medieval times, is still busy and bustling. Get a map from the Tourist office at no 1 the Rambla. Tree-lined and relaxing, full of interesting shops, bars, cafes and restaurants, there is always something going on, something to see, to buy, to eat or drink. One minute shop opens into an **Aladin's cave** of every conceivable clockwork and mechanical toy, another has an amazing display of drinks in which lurk serpents and bugs, well pickled by the vividly coloured alcohol they contain.

All the usual armies feature in Girona's history so **the town has always been well fortified**. A good place to get an idea of the layout is from the **Wall Walk**. Restored and renovated, a path allows you to stroll around the top of the **ramparts** that enclosed the city in the time of Charlemagne.

"Girona covers itself in Flowers"

The **imposing cathedral**, approached by a long flight of wide steps, has grown from the first Romanesque church built in 1038, through the XIV century church with three naves, to the present day cathedral with a single nave, the **widest Gothic nave in the world**. Inside is a fascinating museum displaying the famous XII century **tapestry of the Creation**, a stunningly beautiful piece of needlework, as well as the **Beatus**, a fantastic illuminated volume dating from the X century and a rich collection of medieval gold and silverwork. And there are many other Museums: **The Museum of Art** displaying the history of art related to the Girona region; of **Archaeology**, located in the ancient monas-



tery of Sant Pere de Galligants; of the **Cinema**, containing one of Europe's most important collections; the **History of the City**, from pre-history to the present day; and, the Museum to the **History of the Jews**.

Girona is justly famous for its **Jewish Quarter**. The buildings in steep alleys bordering the Forca housed the Jewish community in the middle ages, until, on the 31st of March 1492, Isabelle of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon **decided on the expulsion** of all Jews from Spain. Their fate was rapid, cruel and terrible. Now their history





flower show and competition and has grown into a festival of floral decorations of all shapes and sizes. Huge numbers of visitors are drawn to the Old City to wander and enjoy the **decorations embellishing the ancient stones and historic buildings** and enjoy the charm and originality of the artistry. *This year the dates will be May 9th-17th.*

And for anyone interested in Gardens, Girona's **Botanic Gardens at Cap Roig**, Calella de Palafrugell must be visited. In 1924 Col. and Madame de Woevodsky built a castle, planted **40ha** with pines and laid out the garden.

The Gardens run to the **edge of the cliffs**, glimpses of turquoise Mediterranean jewel like between the pines trees. Arrangements of cactus, of iris, of shrubs and flowering trees are works of art, the only danger the temptation to linger too long and miss the plane.

can be studied at the **Bonstruch Ca Porta Centre** where you will find the Museum of the History of the Jews.



To get the feel of Girona's Arab past a visit to the "**Arab Baths**" beckons. In fact only the style is Arab, the Capucine Convent where they are found is a XII century **Romanesque building**. Consisting of a octagonal pool, a Caldarium (hot steam bath), a Tepidarium (warm room) and a Frigidarium (cold water room), the Frigidarium with its rustic ring vault and dome resting on slender columns is the most interesting.

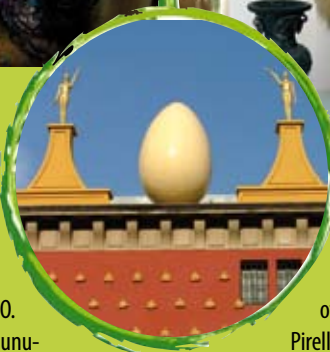
The **Onyar** is the river running through Girona and the houses **built on its banks from the Middle Ages** onwards are much photographed in all the richness of their warm Spanish colours reflected in the slow river water.

For the last fifty or so years, in May, the **whole of Girona covers itself in Flowers**. It started as a small



Dali...

OVER THE BORDER



Salvador Dali (1904 – 1989) once claimed that Perpignan Railway Station was the “Centre of the Universe, because its waiting room is where he got all his best ideas.” Needless to say, it is for this quote that he is best known in the P.O. To learn a little more and to enjoy an unusual day out one needs to start by driving to Cap Creus. Declared a Parc Naturel in 1998, it is on this wild and spectacularly beautiful coast, at Port Lligat, that, in 1930,

“A circular building crowned by huge eggs”

Dali and his beloved Gala bought seven tiny cottages from some local fishermen. This was to be where he would live and work till 1982 when, upon Gala’s death, he took up residence at Púbol Castle. Over the course of forty years he created a labyrinthine home, kitsch in the extreme, fascinating and fantastic as only Dali could have made it. Attracted initially by the light, the landscape and wild isolation of the place, all the rooms have windows of different shapes and proportions, framing that landscape, a constant source of inspiration. A stuffed fully-grown polar bear greets you in the Bear Lobby. A succession of rooms and zones, chan-

ges of levels, blind passageways follow and, as you wander through the maze, you get intimate glimpses of the couple’s private life. You are shown the eccentricity of the library where all the books are deliberately out of reach, the phallic swimming pool carpeted with sea urchins, the temple and altar around which he received his friends, the sofa in the form of Mae West’s lips, the matador fountain, Pirelli tyres. . . All rooms overflow with a multitude of objects and mementoes of Dalí, carpets, whitewash, dried flowers, velvet upholstery, antique furniture, stuffed animals. . . Amazing and strangely touching. Reservations restricted to up to eight persons per visit every ten minutes must always be made in advance. 0034 972 25 10 15, or by e-mail to pllgrups@dali-estate.org and you must pick up your ticket 30 minutes before the hour stated. Late arrival means that you will lose the right to enter the museum and your ticket will be sold.





In fact, he grew up to be a world famous surrealist painter, a sculptor and cineaste. In 1926 he met **Gala**, wife of fellow artist **Paul Eluard**. She was a revelation. Sexually onanistic, **Dali disliked women**, declaring them to be preying mantises. But he had dreamed of painting Gala before he met her and, she was to be the woman with whom he was to **share his life**. He seemed to

There is a small but worthwhile museum to Dali in **Cadeques** (Cadaquès). Cadaques itself is far too pretty for its own good, a bit of a Costa Brava version of Collioure. Full of artists and would be artists and tourists, ceramics and restaurants, **horseshoe-bay** backed by mountains, **whitewashed village houses**, steep slate cobbled alleys leading to the church the altar of which is decorated with more **cherubs** than you would imagine possible to jam on one baroque work of art.



many to be dramatically narcissistic but denied the accusation, declaring he made of his whole life a work of art so that he himself existed only its reflection in the eyes of others. He certainly lives on in the Theatre Museum that bears his name. *No 5, Placa Gala-Salvador Dali, 17600 Figueres. 0034972677500*

“Not many living artists have Museums dedicated to them...”

Figueres and Dali's Theatre Museum is the next stop. You can't miss it. A rose coloured circular building crowned by huge eggs, often with a queue of eager visitors waiting for tickets. The full diversity of his artistic repertoire is displayed within. A skilled draughtsman and spectacular artist with a sense of the absurd more absurd than most. A bizarre man, he was born and died in Figueres and opened his Museum there in 1974. Not many living artists have Museums dedicated to them... but then Salvador Dali was a most unusual artist. At the age of seven he painted his first picture and declared he wished to be **Napoleon Bonaparte** when he grew up.



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AK
A TOUT K.RO

Répetez cinq fois ! **Virelangue**
Six chaises sèchent sûrement

1 A pour abricot! Match up these words, all beginning with A, with their definitions.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| un insecte volant 1 | a un aigle |
| une formule magique 2 | b un abri |
| un endroit pour se protéger 3 | c amer |
| être du même avis 4 | d une abeille |
| mettre un enfant au monde 5 | e un agneau |
| une personne du camp opposé 6 | f une agrafe |
| le petit de la brebis 7 | g accord |
| oiseau au bec crochu 8 | h accoucher |
| qui n'a pas de goût sucré 9 | i abracadabra |
| un petit fil métallique 10 | f un adversaire |

Remplissez les blancs

3

Un homme achète deux perroquets, un 1 et un vert. Un 2, les perroquets s'envolent et 3 posent sur un 4. Le monsieur demande à son 5 d'aller les 6. Le fils revient avec 7 la perroquet rouge. «Mais 8 est le vert?» lui demande son papa. «Je ne l'ai pas 9 parce qu'il n'était pas encore 10.»

a fils - b se - c mûr - d rouge - e seulement - f ramassé - g où - h jour - i récupérer - j arbre

Parts of a whole!

5

Here are the parts – find the whole

Eg le toit, les fenêtres, les portes, les murs

Answer : une maison.

- Un écran, une télécommande, une antenne.
- Une selle, des repose-pieds, un top case
- Des robinets, un bouchon, un siphon
- Une touche, un cadran, un écouteur
- Une porte, une vitrine, une caisse

a un portable - b un magasin - c un évier - d une télévision - e une moto

2 Trouvez la bonne définition

1. un drap

- curtain
- sheet
- flag

2. un lavabo

- toilet
- laundrette
- bathroom sink

3. le sein

- health
- river in Paris
- bosom

4. un exhibitionniste

- flasher (willy wise!)
- exhibitor
- art show

5. une pie

- pudding
- pastry
- magpie

Don't say ... oui,
Say...
Bien sûr
Volontiers
D'accord
Parfaitement
Avec plaisir
Absolument
C'est clair
Sans aucun doute
Ouais (pron way)

VARY YOUR LANGUAGE!

4 Find the English

for the idiomatic expressions below, which all use the verb 'avoir' (Remember! You must break up 'avoir' into its correct part to use these expressions eg j'ai sommeil, nous avons le fou rire)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| avoir un cheveu sur la langue 1 | a to be hungry |
| Avoir du pain sur la planche 2 | b to feel sick |
| avoir la dalle 3 | c to have a lot of work on |
| avoir la gueule de bois 4 | d to have the giggles |
| avoir un chat dans la gorge 5 | e to have a hangover |
| avoir mal au cœur 6 | f to be sleepy |
| avoir sommeil 7 | g to be fed up |
| avoir le fou rire 8 | h to be peckish |
| avoir un petit creux 9 | i to lisp |
| (en) avoir ras le bol! 10 | j to have a frog in your throat |

ANSWERS TO 'TEST YOUR FRENCH' PO Life n°21

- 1h 2f 3g 4i 5j 6c 7a 8d 9e 10b
- 1b 2a 3b 4a 5c
- 1i 2g 3e 4h 5a 6f 7d 8j 9c 10b
- 1b 2j 3e 4f 5d 6h 7a 8g 9i 10c

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Améliorez votre Anglais

Répétez cinq fois ! Tongue twister

Shy Sharon says
she shall sew sheets

✓ More expressions with take

take after – tenir de quelqu'un.

He takes after his mother

Take off - décoller

The plane took off late

Take on - embaucher

They are taking on more staff

Vocabulaire!

Ne dites pas... **yes**

Dites...

By all means

Of course

Certainly

Definitely

Precisely

Very well

Willingly

Yep!

B is for boat! Trouvez les définitions de ces mots suivants, qui commencent tous avec B

1

A game using dice 1 a bank

salt water 2 b billion

a large monkey 3 c bucket

You can put your money here safely! 4 d breakfast

person who is mean to those weaker than he 5 e baboon

a container with a handle.. 6 f backgammon

morning meal. 7 g bones

parts of the skeleton 8 h bark

a thousand million 9 i bully

hard, outer covering of a tree 10 j brine

Phrase utile

*All work and no play
makes Jack a dull boy
Il ne faut pas travailler
tout le temps!*

Pardon my French!

Trouvez la bonne traduction pour ces phrases utiles qui contiennent toutes le mot 'French'

2

French kiss 1 a filer à l'anglaise

French stick 2 b embrasser avec la langue

French window 3 c frites

French dressing 4 d une porte-fenêtre

French fries 5 e la vinaigrette

French letter 6 f une baguette

French leave 7 g une capote anglaise

Remplissez les blancs 3

A 1 in a restaurant was being 2. First he asked the waiter to turn 3 the air conditioning because he was too hot, then he asked for it to be turned 4 because he was too cold. Ten minutes 5, he was 6 again of being too hot and 7 too cold, and so it went on for 8 half an hour.

9, the waiter was very patient; he walked back and 10 and never 11 got angry. Finally, another customer asked him why he didn't throw the pest 12.

"Oh, I really don't 13," said the waiter with a 14. "We don't 15 have an air conditioner."

A Surprisingly - b mind - c once - d awkward - e forth - f up - g smile - h later - i about - j customer - k out - l even - m complaining - n down - o then

RÉPONSES d'AMÉLIOREZ VOTRE ANGLAIS PO Life n° 21

1 1f 2i 3b 4a 5g 6e 7h 8c 9j 10d

2 2 1c 2b 3c 4a 5b

3 3 1b 2g 3j 4c 5k 6h 7l 8d 9f 10a 11e 12i

4 4 1g 2j 3a 4b 5i 6c 7d 8f 9h 10e

Spotlighton

PLACE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE

Perpignan

The magnificent **Place de la République** has had a hideous multi-story carpark removed from its centre and placed underground and has become a delightful place in which to sit, and eat, drink, shop and relax. An old 1795 watercolour shows that this, indeed, how it was planned. Then known as Place de la Liberte, the theatre was built in 1813 and there were plane trees under which each morning there was a market and each evening the good folk of Perpignan would stroll. Not so very different from today. (There will be more on Perpignan past and present in the next P O Life.)

CANCER SUPPORT FRANCE EXTENDS ITS SERVICE

Cancer Support France, a French-registered charity which provides a telephone support service to English speaking cancer patients and their carers will form a new association "Cancer Support France - Sud de France (11,09,66)" and offer help by telephone to English-speakers suffering from cancer who live in the departments of the Aude, the Ariège and the Pyrénées Orientales.

Volunteers from each of these departments will bring a wide range of skills and experiences to the new association. Many members have had personal experience of cancer, either as patients or as carers or healthcare professionals. Others have had previous experience in providing support as trained counsellors or bring similar valuable experience to the new association.

It is expected that the new branch will be ready to provide a telephone support service, help with translation and an information service to cancer patients and their carers early in 2009.

Cancer Support France is particularly looking for volunteers in the Ariège and the Pyrénées Orientales. Further information for those seeking help and volunteers is available on www.cancersupportfrance.info

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ARC IRIS

Recycling

Out of Baixas on the D614 a sign on the right points to l'*usine d'incineraton*. And, through the vineyards and a conglomeration of electrical pylons, gleaming in the distance, is a magnificent factory dedicated to the recycling of paper, metal and plastic and of turning our household rubbish into usable energy.

Waste to Energy. What a brilliant concept.

Sydetom 66 is the association responsible for collecting all the household rubbish of the P. O. *Cydel* is the private compa-



"The energy created by combustion of the remaining waste produces enough electricity to light a town of 20,000 inhabitants."

ny that operates the factory that converts it either into neat blocks of recyclable materials or into electricity. Active since 2002/3, 45,000 tonnes of household rubbish a year are treated. In general, 90% of rubbish collected can be recycled. The energy created by combustion of the remaining waste produces enough electricity to light a town of 20,000 inhabitants. 20% serves all the needs of the factory, the remaining 80% is sold to the EDF.

Ecological and economical, a visit to "Le Centre de Tri" at Arc Iris demonstrates the importance of recycling. (Should you have had any doubts). From the outside, the two stylishly designed buildings resemble the Museum of Modern Art in Bilbao. Inside, the task performed may

Waste to Energy:

the pot of gold at the end of the Arc Iris?

not be water to wine, but, waste? what waste?

Pretty miraculous.

In the smaller one, impressive machines sift the paper, cartons and plastic. Great conveyor belts roll recyclable rubbish up and down and round,

ending in a room where several men and women complete the sorting process. Finally all recyclable material is compressed into blocks and stored to be sold and re-invented. Any rogue rubbish is redirected to the larger building that houses the ovens of incineration. It is to this building that household and hospital waste is taken. The system of combustion is fast and efficient. Virtually nothing remains that cannot be reused: for example, the new TGV line to Barcelona is based on the Cydel factory cinders, others are re-used in road building. And the smoke? It is purified and purified till all that returns to the atmosphere is a little small trail of non toxic vapour.

Impressive!

04 68578686 to arrange a visit.

★ According to the 'code forestier' and 'arrêté préfectoral' of 18/13/2004, if you are the owner of land which is less than 200 metres from woodland, brush land or moors, it is your legal responsibility to limit fire risk by clearing and cutting back all undergrowth within 50 metres of your property. This should be completed by April 15th, after which the ONF (Forestry Commission) can and will start imposing fines on everyone who has not cleaned and strimmed around their properties.

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PIERRE CONTENT

Fascination with movement

If you have ever walked beside the port building in Port Vendres, you may have noticed a sculpture of a traveller weighed down by two large suitcases. "Le Voyageur", another arrival amongst the many passengers who have disembarked here, is the work of Pierre Content.

Like his sculptures, Pierre seems always to **be in motion**. His workshop, small, neat and packed with surprises, is a **perfect**

reflection of the artist. On his worktable stands a large figure, half-man, half-double bass, emerging from torn strips of the *Indépendant* newspaper.

Pierre opens a glass-fronted bookcase crowded with palm-size

pieces in wood and clay. "*These are my models,*" he says, lovingly stroking the details of a wooden dolphin. "*They are my children and they grow with me.*" His sculptures of animals and people, in

bronze or resin, are 15 or 30 centimetres high. **Forms are simplified**. Detail is sacrificed in the name of movement. A leaf folded on itself becomes the model for a mother and child, a teapot turned upside down becomes a bird. "*There are no rules,*" Pierre says.

His first contact with sculpture was a life-size polar bear by Pompon in a Dijon park. He also admires the simplicity of certain works by Henry Moore and Picasso. The sketches in his orderly notebooks appear spontaneous, almost cartoonish. His studies in fine arts and architecture sharpened his love of design, but he never could reconcile himself with straight lines.

Curves, purity of line and simplicity characterise his work. In 2009, to satisfy gallery demands in Luxembourg, Geneva and Brussels. Pierre is making bigger pieces than in the past. The papier maché double bassist wrapped around his instrument, for example, will be 80 centimetres high.

His dream project is to produce a **life-size orchestra** for a public place. Any takers?

Contact Pierre by visiting his site at www.pierrecontent.com.



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by Jane Mann

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Looks familiar? In fact, despite their similarity 'Hommage des Déportés' which can be seen in Av Guillat is in Thuir is not a Pierre Content sculpture but crafted by ROSA SERRA, a sculptress from Olot in Spain.



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